(a) whether the scientists fighting malaria are preparing the ground for one of the most audacious attempts to wipe out the disease, genetically modifying an entire animal species in the wild;

(b) if so, whether the scientists have been able to spread a synthetic gene throughout the population of dangerous mosquitoes, making it impossible for them to pass malaria on to humans; and

(c) if so, the main steps Government have taken to eradicate malaria from the country?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) to (c) Scientists from Imperial College, London and European Moleculer Biology Institute at Heidleberg, Germany are reported to have developed genetic transformation system for the mosquito (anpheles stephensi) causing malaria. The study is at experimental stage only.

Steps taken for control of malaria in the country include:

Early case detection and prompt treatment.

Selective Vector Control.

Promotion of personal protection methods.

Early detection and containment of epidemics

Information, Education and Communication towards personal prevention and Commuity participation.

Institutional and Management capacity Building, Trained Manpower Development and efficient Management Information System (MIS).

Issuance of advance warning to States / UTs suggesting all the preventive and control measures.

Creating of house fly with human gene by CCMB, Hyderabad

1413. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Centre for Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad has created a house fly with a human gene in it;

(b) whether it is also a fact that this transgenic fly helps in anti-Cancer drug testing; and

(c) if so, when do Government propose to file patent?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR) (a) and (b) Centre for Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad has successfully introduced a colon cancer gene in the fruit fly drosophilla. This model of the fly can be used as a target for anti-cancer screening.

(c) A patent has been applied for by CSIR in USA for the invention.

Increase in Psychic Patients

†1414. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of psychic patients is increasing in the country constantly;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that most of the psychic patients are boys and girls in the age group of 30; and

(d) if so, the plan Government are making to prevent the younger generation from this disease?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The number of persons with mental illness is increasing due to changes in demographics such as increase in population and over all increase in the rate of depression world wide. Epidemiological studies have revealed that 1 to 2% of the population have major mental disorders and 5 to 10% suffer from minor mental disorders. Although incidence of psychiatric disordes is more in younger persons in the age range of the 20-35 years, the prevalence rates become highest in age group of 35-44 years due to chronicity of cases and the number getting comulated towards higher are group 35-44 years.

(d) The Government has already initiated a pilot programme for providing care for persons with mental disorder in selected districts in the Country. The district Mental Health Programme, launched in 1996-97, is currently being implemented in 25 districts covering 20 States and Union Territories. Its aim is to identify persons suffering from various mental disorders and epilepsy and manage them at the primary health care centre and district level by trained doctors and with the active support of the families and the community in which the patient lives.

†Original notice of the question was reeceived in Hindi.